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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LISBON 003114

SIPDIS

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S/CT FOR PALMER, ANKARA FOR HAYDEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2017

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [PO](#)

SUBJECT: NOVEMBER US-EU COTER MEETING ENHANCES DISCUSSION
AND COOPERATION

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, U.S. Embassy Lisbon
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: U.S. and EU counterterrorism (CT) experts shared their assessments, concerns, and cooperation agendas at the November 29 working group meeting on terrorism (COTER). In response to the U.S. briefing on the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TS/CTP), the Portuguese presidency requested that the U.S. brief the full EU COTER December 4 and agreed to instruct Missions to coordinate with U.S. Embassies in the nine TS/CTP countries on capacity building and Countering Violent Extremism programs. The U.S. urged support for the Government of Pakistan's three-pronged (political, economic and security) program in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the Afghan/Pakistan frontier as crucial to eliminate that key terrorist safehaven. The United States also urged more European action against the PKK, and particularly PKK criminal activities, emphasizing its impact on regional stability. The U.S. delegation offered updates on the results of the G-8 meeting in Lyon and the USG conference on radicalization. The Portuguese presidency discussed the highlights of its COTER leadership and plans to expand discussions between COTER, NGOs and North African partners. The next US-EU COTER meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2008 in Brussels. End Summary.

THE THREAT

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12. (C) The U.S. and EU's terrorism assessments both noted increased senior al-Qaida leadership mobility and aggregation of regional terrorist networks. S/CT Deputy Coordinator Virginia Palmer underscored U.S. efforts to disaggregate Al-Qaida's network using all elements of national power, not just military and law enforcement tools. Asked where such efforts were bearing fruit, Palmer cited the effect of Operation Balikatan in the Southern Philippines and emphasized that capture/kill operations only "bought time" for development, rule of law programs and other programs to address the conditions that terrorists exploit, the key battle in the war on terror. Abigail Shields from the EU Council Situation Center for Terrorism stated that, in

addition to the external terrorist threat, the EU was focused on home-grown terrorism originating from radicals born and/or raised in Europe. Radicalization of these individuals was increasing in mosques, prisons, schools, and through the wider use of the internet, but, Shields admitted, how the radicalization process really operates remains unclear.

INTERNATIONAL CT EFFORTS (COTER, G-8, UN)
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13. (SBU) Portuguese COTER Chair Helena Paiva and incoming Slovenian Chair Andrej Slapnicar reported on efforts to broaden COTER's dialogue with other nations and civil society. Under Portuguese leadership, COTER held meetings with three NGOs, the Algiers Regional Counterterrorism Center (CAERT), and the Algerian government as part of the Portuguese focus on North Africa and the Mediterranean. Paiva also mentioned a possible joint EU-OIC project. Paiva underscored the EU's strong support for the UN as the global forum on counterterrorism and praised the recent U.S. statement before the UN's 6th Committee.

14. (SBU) S/CT's Roopa Rangaswamy summarized the results of the November G-8 Lyon Roma meeting, which discussed initiatives to counter the threat posed by bulk cash smuggling; radicalization; critical infrastructure protection; and plans for development of a G-8 economic plan for the FATA. She mentioned that the U.S. had pledged nearly \$500,000 to the UN Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) for projects on radicalization and protection of vulnerable targets and hoped that the outcomes of all of the CTITF working groups would lead to a productive review of the UN Strategy.

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CAPACITY BUILDING, TS/CTP, FATA, EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD
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15. (C) Portugal's Special Representative for CT issues Joaquim Moreira de Lemos expounded on the EU's counterterrorism technical assistance to Morocco and Algeria. He admitted that past attempts to coordinate had been unsuccessful, partially due to the EU's decision-making structures. The European Commission set aside 2 million euros for 2008 to expand cooperation with the Moroccans and Algerians. Lemos confided that the Troika with Pakistan had clearly been a wasted effort. The French EU Presidency aimed to establish a new CT troika with Egypt in 2008. The European Commission's Efthymios Costopoulos said the EU included CT components in its stability promotion and European Neighborhood programs. He claimed that it was a difficult balance, especially given the European court ruling against using development monies for CT efforts in a recent case regarding aid to the Philippines. Palmer expressed concern that such limitations could force governments to tailor programs to fit pots of funds rather than address real threats.

16. (C) Palmer explained that in a recent Regional Strategy Initiative meeting, U.S. Ambassadors in the Maghreb and Sahara regions had recommended closer cooperation on CT and CVE programs with European partners. Palmer briefed the group on the U.S.'s comprehensive \$157 million military, governance, development and public diplomacy program Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TS/CTP) and requested that EU Missions be instructed to meet with U.S. counterparts in the nine TS/CTP countries to compare notes and identify gaps to facilitate further cooperation and that results of those discussions be discussed at the next US-EU COTER consultations. A representative of Portugal's intelligence service asked if the U.S. believed exchange programs for religious leaders in that region were useful. Palmer and EEB's Steve Bondy replied that they were indeed and that

exchanges including representatives from more than one nation also facilitated regional networking. Paiva invited a U.S. delegation to participate in the December 4 COTER meeting to discuss the Trans-Sahara policy in further detail in order to advance U.S.-EU cooperation.

RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

17. (C) New EU Counterterrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove reported that the EU was divided on internet related terrorism. The EU would like to develop best practices, and is considering how to approach surveillance of websites, an initiative of Germany's EU presidency. The UK is discussing shutting-down websites with internet service providers. Paiva mentioned the EU's interest in the creation of a network of moderate voices (project proposals are being accepted for future funding). Palmer described U.S. efforts, including the creating of the Counterterrorism Communications Center and USG bloggers who post entries in Arabic and Farsi to clarify U.S. policy and denounce extremism. She noted the importance and difficulty of empowering credible voices without tainting their organizations and messages.

18. (C) USEU NAS Counselor James McNulty reported on the State Department-sponsored workshop on radicalization. Attendees discussed key factors that lead to radicalization. He suggested holding a second conference, perhaps with broader participation, to continue the discussions and plans for outreach. De Kerchove mentioned that the EU would revisit and likely update its radicalization policy in 2008.

PKK

19. (C) Responding to the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) threat would help stabilize Iraq's northern border and

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reassure Turkey, Palmer said. Ankara's Resident Legal Adviser Suzanne Hayden recounted U.S. efforts to tackle "indirect terrorism," such as financial assistance, that supported the PKK and other groups. She outlined a proposed Roundtable discussion to be hosted by U.S. DOJ for EU partners and Turkey to discuss extradition details on high level targets. Hayden stressed the need for Member State support of the Roundtable and enhanced cooperation in combating indirect and direct terrorism. De Kerchove offered to continue consultations with the DOJ, especially on financial security in Northern Iraq.

QODS FORCE

110. (C) In response to the EU's inquiry regarding the U.S. designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force, Rangaswamy explained that the designation addressed the Qods Force's provision of material support to the Taliban and other terrorist groups. She stressed that the Qods Force was not designated for the conduct of terrorist activities and noted that U.S. designation authorities allow for the designation of groups on a variety of grounds, including the provision of material support. Paiva expressed concern that this designation undermined the position that states acting in their official capacity do not engage in terrorism. She worried that the U.S. designation could negatively impact the CCIT discussions and could be exploited by the Non-Aligned Movement.

Next Steps

111. (C) Slovenia reported that during its chairmanship of the COTER, it intends to continue much of the Portuguese agenda including the Portuguese emphasis on implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy. The Western Balkans will

be the geographic focus. Slapnicar announced Slovenia's intention to address the potential terrorist threat of Islamic extremism related to Bosnia and Kosovo and radicalization and recruitment issues in the region. In addition, Slovenia hopes to hold a EUROMED meeting on terrorism.

¶12. (U) Participants:

U.S.
Virginia Palmer, Deputy Coordinator, S/CT
Roopa Rangaswamy, Director, Office of Trans-Regional Affairs, S/CT
Steve Bondy, Director, Office of Terrorism Finance and Sanctions, EEB/ESC/TFS
Peggy Walker, EUR/ERA
Suzanne Hayden, Embassy Ankara
Jim McNulty, USEU
Mary Lee Warren, USEU
Paul Fitzgerald, USEU
Jackie Bednarz, USEU
Dana Brown, notetaker

EU
Joaquim Moreira de Lemos, Chair, EU Presidency Special Rep for CT
Helena Alexandra de Paiva, EU Presidency COTER Chair, MFA
Efthymios Costopoulos, European Commission, DG RELEX
Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
Elisabetta Pietrobon, Council Secretariat
Abigail Shields, EU Situation Center
Andrej Slapnicar, COTER Chair, Security Policy Department, Slovenian MFA
Stephenson